

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Wells/Robertson House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1 Wells Avenue

☐ not for publication

city, town Gaithersburg

☐ vicinity of 8th congressional district

state Maryland

county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name City of Gaithersburg

street & number 31 South Summit Avenue

telephone no.: 301-258-6300

city, town Gaithersburg

state and zip code Maryland 20877

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Judicial Center

liber 8028

street & number 50 Courthouse Square

folio 108

city, town Rockville

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title MNCPPC Historic Sites Atlas M:21-2 of Map 15, "Old Gaithersburg"

date 1976

☐ federal ☐ state ☒ county ☒ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. M-21-156

Wells/Robertson House
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Wells/Robertson House was built in 1885 by William T. Hilton and Sons, the county's best known carpenter/builder, and displays many examples of the late Victorian-Queen Anne architectural vocabulary. It was renovated and restored in 1988.

The building faces northeast, and fronts on a street parallel to the railroad tracks and depot area where its owner maintained a large milling company. It is 2 1/2 stories of irregular silhouette having projecting bays, ells and additions. It has a steeply pitched compound roof with front facing gables and lower cross gables. It is now L-shaped, due to a 20th century 2 story wing addition. Its clapboard siding is relieved by shaped shingling decorating the upper part of front gable and side bay. The foundation is part brick, part pressed block. The original shingle patterned tin roof was replaced in 1988 by the shaped wood shingles now present; shaped brackets decorate the cornice line. An unusual "Gothic" style chimney rises from the primary gable (see drawing). The windows in the original sections are the long, narrow one-over-one with plain surrounds. The additions have shorter one-over-one sash windows. A lunette with multi-pane top decorated the front gable and side bay.

Entry to the property is through a picket fence with paneled cement gate posts. A porch runs the full width of the original house and wraps around the right side of the house, terminating with a 2 1/2 story cut-away bay. The porch has slender column supports under a dentiled cornice and no balustrade. The front gable and slightly projecting lower gable hold the major decorative details, consisting of decorative vent under a jerkin head in the taller gable and the shingling and lunette in the lower gable. A jigsawn and pierced vergeboard with rosette bosses rises above the lunette. Matching woodwork decorates the brackets atop the cut-away bay on the west side.

The west side is a continuation of the porch and has a second entry and a cut-away bay and one bay, one story addition. Both entrance doors are paneled below with glass on the top half. The south side of the original house is two bays wide, over a one story projection that is a service porch, now enclosed. A two story three bay long addition projects eastward from the main body. It has matching clapboard siding and little decoration; two outside entrances have slightly raised railed porches.

The interior contains many of its original elements, particularly the woodwork in the entry gable. The mantelpiece and surrounds are original as is the staircase with its knobbed newel post and leaf decoration. Eastlake inspired incised brasswork marks the pocket doors. A noteworthy hanging gasolier of brass lights the staircase, which also displays ball pendants. Door surrounds with "button" bosses are extant throughout.

At the northeast corner of the lot is the original carriage shed, now a triple bay garage which repeats the compound gable and decorative vent on the house. A windowless pump house/utility building is also present on the lot.

8. Significance

Survey No. M-21-156

Wells/Robertson House
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history

Specific dates 1885 Builder/Architect William T. Hilton & Sons

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Built for one of Gaithersburg's most prominent commercial developers, this 1885 home is a noteworthy example of vernacular Queen Anne architecture. It was extensively rehabilitated and adapted in 1988 in a successful blend of original and replicated elements.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The choice of Gaithersburg as a railroad way station was quickly followed by the arrival of 19th century's entrepreneurs and developers. The land close to the tracks was sold and resold for businesses, but residences in the newest architectural styles were also built nearby. The village center gradually moved from the Frederick Road corridor to the depot area.

One of the earliest investors was the 35 year old J. Sprigg Poole who owned the land on which the early depots and warehouses were built and several acres on both sides of the tracks. In October 1880, he employed Henry Chew Miller, son of a Tridelphia manufacturer and an experienced manager. Mr. Miller, with Mr. I. T. Fults, would buy out Mr. Poole in 1886, and their large milling company called Gaithersburg Milling and Manufacturing would dominate the business for many years. In addition, Mr. Miller was instrumental in bringing the first bank, First National Bank, and the Episcopal Chapel to town and in organizing the volunteer fire department.

By the mid 1880's, Mr. Miller, through his wife Rosa, had purchased several parcels of land from Mr. Poole. On 1 1/2 acres fronting on the railroad, and opposite the depot and his large milling complex, they built this, their first Gaithersburg residence in 1885. The signature of Barnesville carpenter William T. Hilton has been found on this house. Architecturally the building displays the late Victorian-Queen Anne vocabulary with its steeply pitched, irregular gables with sawn and pierced decoration or lunette window; its cut-away two-story bay, and the over-all contrasting surface textures and shapes from smooth clapboards to shaped shingles and patterned tin roof.

As the Millers prospered in the ever expanding town, they added nearby land around the home, including a 1.3 acre site southwest of this residence, where they built a new residence in the more stylish Colonial Revival style in 1895.

The Montgomery County Sentinel newspaper took note when the house "... near the station was sold to Professor George Boehmer of Washington for \$4,000", in 1895. When Professor Boehmer died the same year the house was sold to Kate Shaw.³ After her daughter Kate married Dr. Isreal Warfield, a dentist who divided his time between Rockville and Gaithersburg, Mrs. Shaw deeded the home to them. Dr. Warfield added the garage in 1918.⁴

Between 1919 and 1925, Inez Gardiner was the owner of this home. In 1925 Gordon T. Wells and his wife purchased the house. The west side wing and rear ell were added soon after. Mr. and Mrs. Wells, and then their daughter Mary Wells Robertson,⁵ owned the home for 62 years until its sale to the City of Gaithersburg in 1987. At that time, a picket fence still enclosed the shady, landscaped grounds - a quiet oasis only a few feet from the traffic and bustle of the city.

The house has been carefully renovated and rehabilitated to restore it and adapt it to modern use. The interior retains most of its original woodwork in fireplace mantle, staircase and door surrounds, and its metal work in the incised brass fittings of the pocket doors dividing the parlors, and the hanging chandeliers. On the exterior, a mix of extant original materials, and newly fabricated replications, illustrates the best aspects of its Victorian heritage.

Footnotes:

- 1 - Portrait and Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, Chapman Publishing, 1896, p. 815-816
- 2 - Montgomery County Land Records EBP, folio 41 and EBP 36, folio 277
- 3 - Montgomery County Equity Case #1413
- 4 - Tax Assessment Records 1878 - 1927
- 5 - Land Records 392-151 (1925) and 2494-484

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M-21-156

Montgomery County Land, Tax and Equity Records
Plats - 1894 City of Gaithersburg, 1917 Klinge Atlas, 1914 Sanborn
Poole and Miller family histories

Wells/Robertson House
Gaithersburg, Maryland
Fire Insurance

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.2 acre parcel

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

2.2 acre parcel located in the Deer Park Subdivision between Gaithersburg City Hall and the B&O Railroad Park.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Cissel for the City of Gaithersburgorganization Historic Research Associatesdate August 1989street & number 7526 Weatherby Drivetelephone 301-330-3005city or town Rockvillestate Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

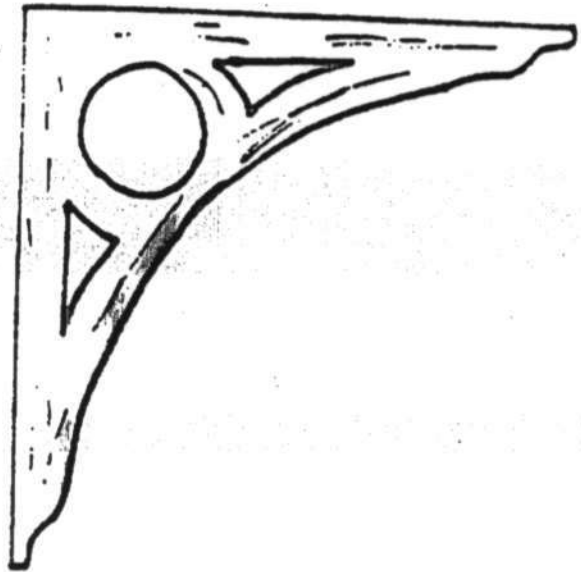
Wells/Robertson House
Gaithersburg, Maryland
M-21-156

1.

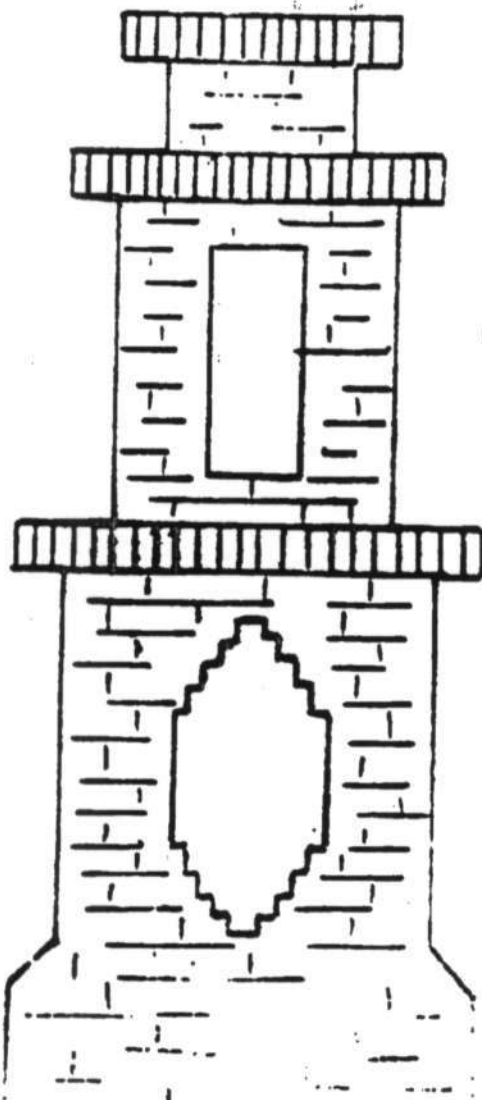


FRONT SEMI-CIRCULAR WINDOW

2.



DECORATIVE KNEE BRACKET



A

- GOTHIC STYLED CHIMNEY



M: 21-156





M: 21-156



M: 21-156



M: 21-156



HISTORY OF THE WELLS-ROBERTSON PROPERTY

The Wells-Robertson property was once part of the 1723 land grant "Deer Park" which had changed hands several times during the mid 19th Century. By 1861, "Deer Park" had been purchased by Francis Clopper from Newland Irish. After Francis Clopper's death in 1868, his heirs divided his properties among them; his daughter Mary Augusta Hutton was deeded in January 1870 possession of "Deer Park" as well as the family homestead, "Woodlands," on Clopper Road. Her husband, William Rich Hutton, was a well known civil engineer who had worked on many projects. It was he who designed the Washington Bridge over the Harlem River in New York City. In 1879, the Huttons sold to John Sprigg Poole 6.5 acres on what is now Summit Avenue, then called Clopper Avenue. The property sold included the present sites of the City Hall, Post Office, Shell Station, B&O Station and City parking lots, as well as the Wells-Robertson house.

By July 1885, William J. Hilton & Sons, of Barnesville, were building the present Wells-Robertson house for J. Sprigg Poole and Rosa Miller. In November 1885, J. Sprigg Poole sold the lot with the house on it to Rosa Miller in exchange for one acre of land which is now the site of the City Hall tennis courts, pavilion and playing field. Between 1890 and 1896, the property again changed hands. In November 1896, William Talbot, acting as trustee for Elsie Bochmer, sold the property to Mrs. Kate M. Shaw. Mrs. Shaw then sold the property to her daughter, Kate L. Warfield, in September 1900. Mrs. Warfield sold the property in February 1919 to Inez and Henry Gardiner. The Gardiners sold the property to Gordon and Lillian Wells in December 1925. Lillian N. Wells sold the property to her daughter Mary Wells Robertson and her husband John in 1958.

From 1885, the Wells-Robertson property remained unchanged but for the selling of the parcel to the south east of the house to William Michael in 1910 (present City Hall playground), and the buying of a parcel to the north east of the house in 1932 from the Hutton heirs.

The Wells-Robertson House is a late Victorian Style built in 1885. The house is irregular in shape (see attached site plan) with a large, two-story wing or addition extending south from the main house. Other additions are in the rear facing west. The front facade is styled with three bays; the south side has two bays; the east facing of the two-story wing/addition is two bays wide and the north face has five bays with the fourth and fifth appearing to be additions. There are no windows at the back of the original house. German siding encases the entire structure.

The roof of the original structure is covered with tin patterned in a round fish-scale style. The two-story wing to the south is also covered with tin shingles but these are the pointed fish-scale pattern. The roof-line of the original house is capped by a gable in front, but is hipped in the rear. There is an off-set gable over the 2nd and 3rd bays in the front. The peak of the gable has a large wooden louvered vent at the peak while the gable has a semi-circular window with plain surround. (See drawing #1). The gable is covered in fish-scale wood shingles and is supported by decorative knee brackets (see drawing #2) with bullseye molding of the projecting ends. The projecting eaves of the house have exposed rafters with rounded ends, no frieze.

The windows of the original house are all one-over-one double hung sash with plain surrounds capped by an entablature and most have original louvered shutters. The front entrance located in the first bay, has a one-light transom, capped by entablature. The door is a raised panel style with window in top half. The wrap-around porch has a standing seam tin shed roof supported by nine doric columns and a frieze with dentil molding which was added c.1915. There are hinged wooden panels under the porch

with lattice in a diamond pattern. The floor is tongue and groove wood planking.

There are three interior chimneys, one especially unique because of its Gothic design (see drawing A).

The site has formal gardens to the south containing many large boxwoods. The front is lined with a ^{privet} ~~private~~ hedge.

There are three outbuildings. These include a three-car garage of corrugated tin with wooden doors and a standing seam tin roof and two structures covered with German siding and standing seam tin gabled roofs, one probably a meat or smokehouse, the other a garden shed.

Prepared By:

Linda L. Michael

Community Development Coordinator

Source: Historic Inventory B007

Record by L. Bowers Oct. 82

GAITHERSBURG HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET

- - -

ADDRESS - 1 WELLS AVENUE
County: Montgomery
Gaithersburg

MHT # - M-21-156

SURVEY # B007
LOT P-127, BLOCK -

LIBER -, FOLIO -

OWNER: - CITY OF GAITHERSBURG
ADDRESS: - 31 SOUTH SUMMIT AVENUE
CITY: - GAITHERSBURG, MD. 20877

PRESENT USE: residence
ORIGINAL USE: residence
BUILDER: unknown

STYLE: Late Victorian

DATE BUILT: c. 1890

PHYS. COND: good

THREAT: roads/development

SURROUNDINGS: residential/buffer

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DESCRIPTION: This house is one of the more remarkable in Gaithersburg. It has apparently been expanded many times; however, most of the additions appear to have been built in the late 1800's or very early 1900's. The house is irregular in shape with a large, two-storey addition extending south from the original house. Other additions are in the back of the house, facing west.

The original structure as well as the additions are all of German siding. The roof on the original structure is tin shingle in a common Gaithersburg pattern of rounded fish-scale. The two-storey wing, however, is covered with tin shingles in a different, but still common pattern of pointed fish-scales.

The roof of the original house is capped by a gable in front, but is hipped in the rear. There is an offset gable over the 2nd and 3rd bays in the front. The peak of the gable has a large wooden louvered vent at the peak while the gable has a semi-circular window with plain surround (See Drawing #1). The gable is covered in fish-scale wood shingles and is supported by decorative knee brackets (See Drawing #2) with bullseye molding at the projecting ends. The projecting eaves of the house have exposed rafters with rounded ends, no frieze.

The windows in the original house are all one-over-one double hung sash with plain surrounds capped by entablature. The windows are very tall and narrow (approx. 2'x 6') and most have original louvered shutters. There is a window in each of the bays in the 2nd storey and in the 2nd and 3rd bays of the 1st storey. The front door is located in the first bay, has a one-light transom, capped by entablature. The door is raised panel with window in top half.

The wrap-around porch has a standing seam tin shed roof supported by nine Doric columns and a frieze with dentil molding which was added c. 1915. There are hinged wooden panels under the porch with a lattice in a diamond pattern. The floor is tongue and groove wood planking.

The east facing of the two-storey addition is two bays wide. The first bay has 6/6 d.h.s. windows with plain surrounds in both sides. The second bay has a two-storey bay window with a standing seam hipped roof. The front (east face) of the bay has 2/2 d.h.s. windows while the sides are 1/1 d.h.s. windows. All have plain surrounds.

The north face is five bays wide with the 4th and 5th bay appearing to be additions. Single windows, previously described, are in bays one and two. The third bay is a two-storey bay window with a door identical to the front door (without transom) leading to the porch. The north face of the bay window has a side-by-side 1/1 windows. There is a gable matching the front facing one.

There is a two-storey addition with the second storey inset. The second storey has a 1/1 d.h.s. window with shutters in each of the two bays. They have plain surrounds, no entablature. The first floor of the addition has standing seam tin roof and a foundation of coursed cut stone. In the first bay is a 1/1 d.h.s. window and a door. The second bay has a double nine-light casement window.

The back of the original house has no windows. The addition runs southward and has three 2/2 d.h.s. windows with plain surrounds in the inset second storey. The ground floor has a large sun porch completely enclosed with 1/1 casement windows with wainscoting below. The sun porch is supported by brick piers.

The south face of the addition is one bay wide with a 6/6 d.h.s. window with plain surrounds on each floor, offset to the east. The attic window, offset to the west, is a 4-light casement window. The roof of this wing is

M:21-156

a medium-rise gable with verges projecting, no cornice and a plain frieze. The south face of the original house is two-bays wide with windows as previously described. The ground floor windows have shutters. Windows are set in random pattern.

There are three chimneys (See Drawing A). The interior chimney of the original house is unique in Gaithersburg for its Gothic design.

The house has formal gardens to the south containing many large, old boxwoods. The east boundary (front) of the property is lined with a privet hedge on either side of the concrete piers. The north boundary of the formal gardens is marked by a picket fence with scalloped top. This fence is a standard picket except for its juncture with the house where it is topped with wooden lattice.

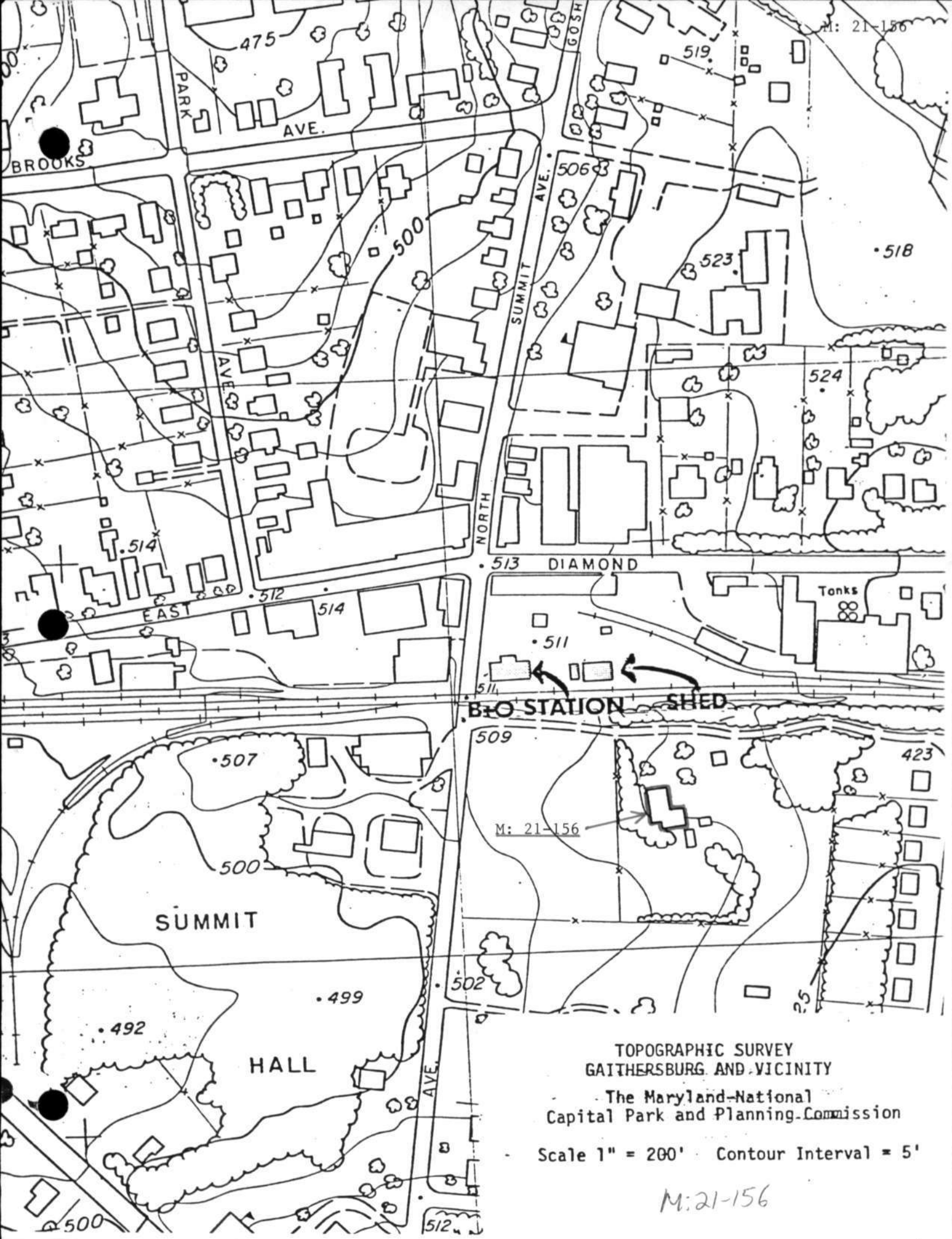
There are three outbuildings: 1) a three-car garage of corrugated tin, with wooden doors and a standing seam tin roof; 2) two outbuildings near the house of German siding with standing seam tin gabled roofs, one probably a meat or smoke house, the other a garden shed.

Recorded by:

Lee Bowers

October 1982

Historic Inventory Task Force



TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY
GAITHERSBURG AND VICINITY

The Maryland-National
Capital Park and Planning Commission

Scale 1" = 200' Contour Interval = 5'

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